

Obj. 2.03 The Roman Empire

Geography

- ⊙ Rome
 - Peninsula of Italy
 - Helped people unite
 - Low mountains
 - Fertile plains
 - Mediterranean Sea

The Roman Republic

- ⊙ Founded in 509 BC
 - By the Latins
 - Defeat of the Etruscans
 - Fearful of a monarchy
 - Republican form of government
 - Officials chosen by the people
 - No hereditary positions

Republican Government

- ⊙ Senate
 - Most powerful
 - Land holding upper class (patricians)
 - Made laws
 - Elected magistrates
- ⊙ Consuls
 - Two who were appointed for a year
 - Had to be elected into these positions first:
 - Quaestors
 - Praetors

Political Life

- ⊙ The rest of the citizenry were called plebeians
 - In early Rome, most were farmers
 - As empire grew, conquered peoples were given citizenship

- ⊙ **Power came from their numbers**
 - 366 BC one of two consuls had to be plebeians
 - Plebeian assembly of tribunes created in 287 BC

Roman Law

- ⊙ Equality under the law
- ⊙ Rights of the accused
 - Innocent until proven guilty
 - Mount a defense to charges
- ⊙ Laws of the Twelve Tables
 - 450 BC
 - First written Roman laws
 - Put in marketplace

Roman Empire

- ⊙ By 270 BC, all of Italy was part of the empire
- ⊙ Later, Macedonia, Greece, Carthage and parts of Asia Minor
- ⊙ By 48 BC, under Julius Caesar, empire expanded to Spain, France, and Palestine
- ⊙ Expansion was a direct result of
 - Strong, well-disciplined army
 - Treating conquered peoples fairly

Imperial Rome

- ⊙ Began with the Octavian (Augustus Caesar) 31 BC to 14 AD
 - Julius Caesar's handpicked successor
 - Senate made him *princeps* (first citizen)
 - Renewed his consulship annually
 - He had control of the army
 - Created the Praetorian Guard
 - Elections still took place, but Augustus said who should be elected
 - 5 members of his family succeeded him
 - Ushered in Pax Romana (200 years of Roman peace)

Roman Achievements

- ⊙ Law
- ⊙ Republican form of gov't
- ⊙ Architecture
 - Dome
 - Arch

- Aqueduct
- Roads from Britain to the Middle East

⊙ Languages *derived from Latin*

- Italian, French, Spanish
(Romance Languages)

Rise of Christianity

- ⊙ Began early in Pax Romana
 - Jews were accepted by Romans
 - But, many rebelled
 - Zealots wanted independence from Rome
 - 135 AD, diaspora from Palestine begins

⊙ Romans disliked Christians

- Even killed for entertainment
- Introduced crucifixion

⊙ By 313 AD, freedom to worship Edict of Milan

⊙ 393 AD, Christianity becomes official religion

Effects of Christianity

- ⊙ Rome becomes of Christian empire by late 300s
- ⊙ Paul of Tarsus
 - Converts Gentiles (non-Jews)
 - Removes Jewish dietary restrictions (Mosaic Law)
 - Writes epistles (letters) to Christians in different parts of the empire
- ⊙ Emperor Constantine builds “Constantinople” in Asia Minor (Turkey) making it a Christian city

Fall of Rome

⊙ Military Causes

- Germanic peoples (Visigoths) invade empire
- Army not as well-trained since Pax Romana
- Empire too large to protect without hiring foreign soldiers

Fall of Rome

⊙ Economic Causes

- Heavy taxes
- Farmers impoverished by conquest
- Middle class disappears
- High amounts of slave labor

Fall of Rome

○ Political Causes

- Government becomes too strict and arbitrary
- Many corrupt officials
- Divided empire weakens
- People no longer see government as effective

Fall of Rome

○ Social Causes

- Population declines because of war and diseases
- Lack of moral code
- Rise of Christianity